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Cases in which incumbents of the posts are being paid at a level other than the one provided for the post

Report of the Secretary-General*

Summary

By paragraph 66 of its resolution 56/253 of 24 December 2001, the General Assembly noted with concern cases in which incumbents of posts were being paid at a level other than the one provided for in the budget, and requested the Secretary-General to provide it with a comprehensive report on the matter at its fifty-seventh session. The present report responds to that request.

* The issuance of the report was delayed due to a need to complete consultations within the Secretariat on the issue of strengthening control over post management.

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I. Introduction

1. By paragraph 66 of its resolution 56/253, the General Assembly noted with concern cases in which incumbents of posts were being paid at a level other than the one provided for in the budget, and requested the Secretary-General to provide a comprehensive report on that matter to the Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

2. Accordingly, a comprehensive review of post incumbencies, using data of the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) available on 1 September 2002, was undertaken in order to identify such cases. All regular budget posts at and above the General Service Principal level, across all duty stations within the Secretariat, were included in the review.

II. Posts encumbered by staff whose personal grades differ from the level of the posts that they occupy

3. The situation whereby an incumbent of a post is paid at a level other than that of the post that he or she occupies may arise only from a personnel action that places the staff member against a post, the level of which is different from the staff member's personal level. According to the IMIS database on post management, as at 1 September 2002 there were 155 regular budget posts across all budget sections encumbered by staff whose personal grades were lower than the level of the occupied post. This occurrence is not unusual. It reflects decisions by the heads of departments and offices to place, for a limited period of time, staff having sufficient qualifications and experience against the vacant posts, pending the completion of recruitment or placement of staff against those posts in accordance with the procedures of the staff selection system. The need for such temporary placement is usually prompted by the requirements of the approved programme of activities. The number of such cases may vary over time, depending on the overall vacancy situation and the programme priorities of the Organization which require the programme managers to maintain the operational capacity of departments and offices at the necessary level on a constant basis. It may be noted that the number of such cases is low compared to the number of approved regular budgetary posts and, at any given time, varies between 3 and 5 per cent of the number of the p under review.

4. During the review, one case of a post encumb by a staff member whose personal grade was hi than the budgeted level of the post was identi Further examination revealed that this was the resu a decision made by the Secretary-General in 1990 respect to the implementation plan for the promotio staff members whose names had appeared in the promotion register, in accordance with the placer and promotion system in force at that time. promotion of the staff member had not regularized in the budget since 1990 owing to the of an available post. The post occupied by the member was proposed for reclassification in context of the proposed programme budget for biennium 1992-1993 and the proposed progra budget for the biennium 2002-2003, but the prop was never approved.

5. The above-mentioned case is an exception represents a decision taken by the Secretary-Gen within the context of his prerogatives responsibilities as Chief Administrative Officer of Organization under the Charter of the United Nati Such a decision either reflects a need to main transparency in the application of the Organizati norms and procedures vis-à-vis staff, or responds unique situation arising from the Organizati priorities. In the latter case, efforts are always mad identify a vacant post of the required level within staffing table of the Secretariat and to utilize it temporary basis to accommodate the decision until situation is rectified in accordance with the establis procedures.

III. Control mechanisms

6. At present, the IMIS functionalities on management and human resources manager provide for sufficient safeguards against error i abuse of the established administrative procedu Posts against which staff may be placed are n available in IMIS on the basis of approved staf tables. This procedure ensures that each and every is linked to a funding source, in accordance with programme of work approved in the budget. regular budgetary posts, this procedure is automa The exceptions to automated placement are proce manually when the post level does not correspon

the staff member's grade. In such exceptional cases, the data entry and its approval in IMIS are limited to the authorized officials, in line with the system's security standards. When a staff member is assigned to a post budgeted at a grade level that is different from that of the staff member, IMIS sends a warning message to the user. The administrative action for the placement of the staff member against the post can, however, be continued without an error condition being raised by the system, subject to approval of the action by the official to whom such responsibility is delegated. This is the point at which administrative control and accountability become critical.

7. Following the review undertaken in the context of the present report, steps are being taken to increase the level of control in IMIS and to limit further the number of authorized officials responsible for the approval of post availability actions processed in IMIS in cases when the staff member's level is different from that of the post. In this context, the responsibility for approving the availability of a post in IMIS in cases when the staff member's level is higher than that of the post against which that staff member is placed is being removed from the programme managers.

IV. Conclusions and recommendations

8. **Based on the findings of the review of post management, it appears that the IMIS and administrative control mechanisms currently in place in general provide safeguards against error in or abuse of the administrative procedures. Further steps are being taken to strengthen the control mechanisms.**

9. **The General Assembly may wish to take note of the present report.**